DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 064 583 AC 012 657

TITLE	Commission on Vocational Education in Correctional Institutions. Final Report.
INSTITUTION	Commission on Vocational Education in Correctional Institutions, Trenton, N.J.
PUB DATE	Jun 72
NOTE	29p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	College Curriculum; Community Role; *Correctional Education; *Correspondence Study; Counseling Programs; *Educational Needs; Industry; Prisoners; *Rehabilitation Programs; Skill Development; Social Problems; State Programs; Trade and Industrial Education; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*New Jersey

ABSTRACT

This final report of a commission appointed by the Governor of New Jersey to investigate skill training, job preparation, and education of inmates of the state correctional institutions discusses these areas in relation to the inmate's entry, confinement, and departure. The first section of the report, Classification, points out the need for in-depth screening of the inmate upon entry to the institution, with an assessment of his skills, educational background, and life record so that goals for a specific individualized program can be determined. In the section concerned with Education, the commission recommends that: a year-round program be instituted; inmates be allowed to rotate in education programs; classes be also provided in the evenings and on weekends; an incentive program be explored; consideration be given to utilization of ex-offenders as teachers, consultants, and paraprofessionals; a reading program be developed; exploration be made of the need for improved testing methods for determining learning disabilities; a correspondence course be developed by the State; the availability of college programs be increased; the cluster concept in vocational training programs be utilized; educational facilities be improved; and a trade advisory council be established for each vocational course and prison industry. The State Use Industry, as viewed by the commission, is in need of modernization. Release Programs, the last section of the report stresses the responsibility of the State, the institution, industry, and the community in preparing the inmate for re-entry into society. (DB)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED 064583

FINAL REPORT

COMMISSION ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

June, 1972

AC 012 657

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

To the Honorable William T. Cahill, Governor of the State of New Jersey.

We submit herewith the Final Report of the Commission on Vocational Education in Correctional Institutions appointed by you January 1971.

Dated Trenton, New Jersey

June 30, 1972

Raleigh Rajoppi, Chairman

Members

Charles Bennett
Dr. Ralph Brancale
Dr. Kenneth Clay
Dr. Horace J. De Podwin
Gerald Ebner
Raymond Greeley
James F. Jeffries
Frank Hubert
Senator Hugh A. Kelly
William G. Kelner
Joseph A. Reed
Marcia R. Richman
Anne E. Thompson
Chief Elmer Thompson
Kenneth Wooden

Staff

Joseph F. Steliga, Executive Director
Marie A. Gervasio, Secretary-Administrative Assistant

INTRODUCTION

It is possible to describe the American penal system in one word: failure. Its constituency is comprised of the failures of society, schools, and social agencies. Even their aberrant behavior is characterized by failure - they were caught, convicted, sentenced, and incarcerated for their act. This grim picture is further colored by the fact that the correctional system also fails in its attempt to ready a person for a productive role in society.

In part this may be attributed to the fact that the field of corrections is an area of the criminal justice system which is the least visible and the most neglected. No system can be neglected for so long without requiring a reevaluation and up-dating.

Practically speaking we will not likely destroy or replace the penal system. We must change the nature of it. To say New Jersey is no worse or is better than other state systems is to say nothing. Mediocrity is not an acceptable goal. Basic ideological assumptions are involved. Unless there is a radical departure from the patchwork philosophy now in existence there can be no chance for authentic reform.

Unfortunately, we seem to be wedded to this sustaining philosophy through public indifference, fear, and apathy. However, recent events indicate a public becoming more alert to the needs of corrections. This may, in fact, stem from selfish motives. Nonetheless, it is far more desirable than the passing interest piqued by the sensation tinged exposes of the past. A sustained effort of enlightenment will do much to dispel the fear and ignorance enveloping corrections.

Among the flagrant needs of corrections is adequate skill training, job preparation, and education of the inmates. In January of 1971, Governor William T. Cahill convened a Commission to investigate this area of the New Jersey correctional system. As the Commission assumed the mandate of the Governor and addressed itself to its task it became evident that more was required than improved vocational offerings. However, the Commission felt it would best serve by delimiting its scope to this area.

In November 1971 the Commission published its Interim Report. Based on its investigation and utilization of state agencies, community resources, and the private sector, the report delineated specific actions to improve the setting and function of the state correctional institutions.

The Commission feels that the report responded to some specific needs and in the process may have initiated a greater effort and diligence by the Division of Correction and Parole in assisting the inmates of New Jersey for their return to society. It did not provide the answer, but contributed an element to the total effort required for reform.

Any expectations of quick, radical change in our correctional institutions constitutes a false expectation that is not supported by the reality of what is happening and what is about to happen. We must not confuse hope, ideology, and rhetoric with actual accomplishment.

Reports and their attendant recommendations may be made, but there remains an enormous difference between the theory and the execution. It would be irresponsible for the Commission to equate a series of its recommendations with actual change or even the likelihood of change. Nevertheless, the Commission still holds many of its recommendations as valid and intends to reiterate those not already in effect in its Final Report.

There is an inherent difficulty in affecting institutional change. The best intentions are often lost to the oppresive tendency of an existing system to preserve itself. By their very nature such systems resist fundamental change and are adept at ignoring unwelcome recommendations, translating others to serve institutional purposes and eagerly implementing recommendations that tend to strengthen and perpetuate the system.

Nonetheless, we must make today's rhetoric the future's reality.

PROLOGUE

The Commission's deliberations indicate a vital concern to enhance the motivation, competency, and personal resources of offenders to facilitate their eventual reintegration into the community. To accomplish this and to break the tragic circle of recidivism the offender's community must assume an active involvement in his rehabilitation. The inmate's problems are in the community. He must learn to cope with them there and not at some distant secluded institution. The directions of change are toward the community, toward differential handling of offenders, toward a coherent organization of services.

Continuous efforts must develop a series of alternatives to the present system which isolates men in a monolithic institution removed from any realistic environment and which fails to help them function in the community. Thus, the Commission reiterates its endorsement of the community based correction concept and encourages the Division of Correction and Parole to diligently pursue its realization in New Jersey.

Such structures permit a person to live in his own community and maintain normal social relationships whil providing control, guidance, and access to rehabilitative resources and services. It is a more efficient, economic, and humane approach to the treatment of the offender. Moreover, such community-based facilities function more effectively in vital after care services.

However, the current situation demands the Commission to be pragmatic and deal with the immediate problems in the New Jersey correctional system. To provide thematic unity the format of the Final Report will treat the logical progression of an inmate's entry, confinement and departure in a New Jersey state correctional institution.

CLASSIFICATION

Not long after being confined the inmate discovers that the rehabilitation programs he many have placed hope in are either ineffective, irrelevant, or non-existent. This abandonment cannot be tolerated by a society whose initial righteous concern with a man's social character prompted it to commit him there.

There is a need for in-depth screening of every new inmate for a total identification effort. Only through knowing a man and his problems can a program be developed and employed to assist him in his rehabilitation. The initial step in any treatment program should be to determine what an inmate's problems are and then designate explicit concrete objectives to measure the achievement or non-achievement in resolving them.

At a reception center the inmate's skills should be assessed, education revealed, life record reviewed, and medical and dental examinations administered. Every effort should be directed to expose him to whatever modern test and/or evaluative measures exist or may be developed.

During this period an identification emerges and categories develop. Armed with such knowledge the joint effort of inmate and the classification committee will determine goals for specific individualized programs. A set of goals should be agreed upon, with a plan of action and service formulated, to accompany the inmate as long as he remains in the institution.

Too often the mark of assignment does not reflect the inmate's interest or aptitude. Instead, it mirrors the needs of the institution.

The Commission feels it is important that inmates be classified not exclusively by type of offense and security status but by amenability to rehabilitation.

Essential to an effective classification system is increased departmental researching and statistical gathering along with a system of information storage, auditing, and evaluating. The collection and evaluation of social and personal offender data will prove beneficial in aiding the administration in its efforts to provide adequate treatment for the inmates committed to its charge.

CLASSIFICATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Each inmate should initially enter a common reception center for individual counseling, testing, initial classification, program planning and referrals. He or she then help determine the kind of educational or treatment program in which to be involved.

2. Develop a computerized classification system which would provide a treatment profile upon measurement of mental health, educational attainment, vocational and academic aspiration of the offenders as they enter the state correctional system.

3. Increased departmental research and statistical gathering. A system must be devised for information storage, auditing, and evaluation.

4. An approach to program selection should include the determination of inmate aptitudes and interests. This information would then be framed in light of prison resources - personnel, facilities, funds - to develop a treatment program for each inmate.

EDUCATION

Education, in its broadest sense, is a process of change in people and should be the over-riding consideration of any institution's program. The Commission has attached great value in education as essential to the very process of rehabilitation. In its Interim Report it urges, "that the primary and immediate thrust be to improve the conditions and educational climate that exist in the state correctional institutions." (1)

Ultimately, it is our hope that the educational process will produce enough changes in a substantial number of inmates enabling them to return to society and assume productive roles. Some form of education must be available since it has been demonstrated that there is a relationship between recidivism and the educational level and vocational skill. (2)

The Commission found the education system in corrections characterized by an absence of professional resources and a lack of coordination with state-wide efforts. Also, more emphasis is needed on education replacing security and confinement and not merely supportive or incidental to them.

This hope may soon be a reality as a result of recommendations made in the Interim Report, namely, the establishment of a separate school district for corrections with a distinct superintendent. The Commissioners of Institutions and Agencies and of Education have developed this concept and are preparing legislation to be presented for legislative approval.

---

(1) Interim Report of Commission on Vocational Education in Correctional Institutions: November 1971, page 6.

(2) Glazer, D. The Effectiveness of a Prison and Parole System Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1969, page 37.

The school district will further the development of: educational planning; coordination; and goals and standards.

Granted the evolvement of the school district, the Commission feels there should be greater emphasis on outside resources. The administration should utilize existing community resources since their replication within would:

- be costly to initiate and maintain;
- require large space allocation; and,
- be difficult to modify to a fluid job market.

Through the Commission's efforts the Division of Correction and Parole, the Department of Labor, and the Division of Vocational Education have taken a practical, innovative approach through a study release program utilizing the Mercer Skills Center in Trenton to emphasize this concept. Funding was obtained to slot 60 inmates in an evening vocational and related remedial scholastic training program. The success of the program prompts us to recommend its implementation in the other Manpower Development Training Centers throughout the state, as well as area vocational schools.

Furthermore, the concept of community involvement is successfully illustrated in the Distributive Education Programs conducted at Jamesburg Training School for Boys and Trenton Home for Girls. This program combines a school situation with work in the community on a half-day basis. The Distributive Education Program at Jamesburg received a national award from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare for its operation. The Commission recommends that funding be continued at both institutions for this program.

When such opportunities are present the Division of Correction and Parole must move boldly to take advantage of them. The corrections administration must do everything it can to assure that total benefit is realized.

This approach provides an ideal situation to expand into community utilization and acceptance.

Vocational education is a powerful element in rehabilitation. By teaching proper attitudes, assisting in assessing past performances, and developing goals based on newly acquired skills it may be possible to reverse anti-social attitudes and to adopt acceptable behavior patterns. For this reason we cannot ignore a certain commitment to in-house training for those not able to utilize community resources on a study release program.

Vocational programs now being developed for correctional institutions are characterized by the "cluster" concept proposed by the Commission in its Interim Report. Under this educational concept a broad, but related spectrum of skills are taught within a single training unit. This allows for a high degree of occupational exploration by the inmate.

Using the "cluster" concept the Commission assisted in determing programs for:

- Leesburg State Prison in welding and metal fabrication, food service and baking, automotive mechanics, refrigeration/air conditioning/heating, and building trades;

- Rahway State Prison in building trades, automotive mechanics, residential wiring and welding.

In addition, the Commission coordinated efforts with a major auto company to train instructors, donate equipment, and assist in job placement for both institutions.

Through its contacts the Commission organized an Advisory Council of unions and state agencies to provide their expertise in renovating a vacant power plant at Rahway State Prison to house a vocational training facility. To shore up the construction cluster component inmates would actively participate as workers on the renovation project.

A vocational education facility at Jamesburg Training School for Boys has been completed in a renovated building at that site. However, funds have not been appropriated for staff and equipment. The Commission feels this facility should receive budgetary consideration.

It is imperative that the Division of Correction and Parole address itself to the proper utilization of space that will soon be available in Trenton State Prison with the transfer of the license tag shop to Leesburg State Prison. There has been no evidence of inter-agency cooperation and evaluation to determine what vocational training programs should be considered for this institution.

The mobile vocational education units of the Division of Vocational Education provide another approach to vocational training. Through the Commission's efforts the program has been expanded by additional units offering greater concentration in the correctional institutions. This summer a full program is planned for five different institutions consisting of:

- automated typing;
- vocational evaluation;
- small engine repair;
- plastics; and,
- keyboard.

In conclusion, the Commission feels that education programs should receive top priority and the needs of non-education programs should be reviewed to determine if they are using space and men more properly assigned to education. This is especially so in some State Use Industry and institutional maintenance operations.

The Commission calls upon the Division of Correction and Parole to

examine and assess its operations and consider phasing out any farms or industry, which at best may be marginally profitable and contrary, or even detrimental, to rehabilitation. Such a sharp departure from tradition may cause difficulty. However, if any credibility is to exist that the State is concerned about the inmate then he must be placed above products, produce, and livestock.

EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A year round program of education.

2. Rotate inmates in programs to maximize education opportunities. Where appropriate, classification procedures should be revised to permit more students to "flow through" the educational program.

3. Arrange institution schedule to conduct classes in evenings and week-ends where present physical space is limited, as it is in Bordentown. The schedule should be arranged to avoid excessive conflict with recreation time.

4. Exploration of an incentive program which would give specific credits against parole eligibility dates and release time for successful completion of educational programs.

5. The possibility of utilizing ex-offenders in education and therapeutic programs should be considered. Similarly the Commission recommends that Black and Spanish-Americans be employed as teachers, consultants and para-professionals. The obvious advantage of such a policy is the ability to relate to the inmate and his problems.

6. A person who is unable to read cannot be an active participant in our society and economy. The Commission is alarmingly aware of the need to improve the reading level of the inmate population and it is our opinion that:

   a. A planning grant be pursued to develop a reading program specifically for prisons. Rehabilitated ex-offenders should be enlisted to make the program more effective.

   b. Develop a reading program geared to having inmates teach each other on an individual basis.

7. The need for improved capabilities for testing learning disabilities is evident throughout the prison system. This deficiency is particularly acute at institutions charged with responsibility for juvenile offenders, such as the Wilson School at Jamesburg.

To correct this fundamental problem requires the employment of additional educational specialists and psychologists. It is therefore recommended that the Department of Education and the Division of Correction jointly explore the need for additional personnel, and the creation of a centralized learning disabilities testing unit which could provide services at the various institutions.

8. The State Department of Education and Higher Education in conjunction with Corrections should develop a correspondence course geared to inmate capabilities. Such a program should go beyond the aspect of vocational education to include the academic sphere as well. Efforts should be made to have community colleges recognize and accept credits earned through participation in this program. We suggest that course designations include: Black Studies; Basic Math; and, Basic Science.

9. Availability of college programs should be increased, especially at the institutions for youthful offenders. The Division of Correction and Parole has provided a program linking four institutions via a TV network with Mercer County Community College. Such ventures are in keeping with the Governor's sponsoring of a conference of education throughout the State to explore methods for coordinating remedial and college level education for those in prison.

10. Utilize the cluster concept in inmate vocational training programs.

11. In terms of physical space:
    - construction of an education building at Bordentown Youth Correctional Institution;
    - conversion of the vacant license tag shop in Trenton State Prison to a vocational training facility.
    - extend the vocational facilities at Annandale Youth Correctional Institution.

12. Establish a trade advisory council or association for each vocational course and prison industry.

STATE USE INDUSTRY

As State Use Industry operates now it is not productive either training-wise or economically. It has no analogy in the work-a-day world outside. It breeds bad habits. It produces an unsatisfactory basis for a work force in industry. It devours personnel, depriving them of opportunities for education. It negates any attempts to maintain a comprehensive educational level and training system.

The inability of the correctional administration to elicit conscientious performance from the inmates is not due simply to the fact that their's is a captive labor force. The Commission found that:

- the financial incentives were antiquated and insufficient (it had been 45 cents a day, it is now a dollar a day);
- the monotonous, unskilled nature of most prison jobs provides little intrinsic work satisfaction;
- the incentive of Work Time (sentence reduction of one day for five worked) is too remote to motivate the here and now;
- praise and recognition from the administration have little value when lined against the gibes and aggression of fellow inmates.

The Commission realizes it may not be entirely expedient or wise to eliminate all State Use Industry. Thus, its Interim Report recommended that a shift of emphasis from products to service be attempted, since the State, with its critical needs in institutions, transportation, housing, and environmental protection, is a consumer not only of goods but of human services.

A patent example of this is the training program for stationary engineers. There has been a need for licensed "Black Seal" operators in many state institutions. The Commission felt that inmates could be trained to meet this demand and receive a job prospect upon release.

A training program has been developed at seven correctional institutions involving five inmates at each location. The training consists of one licensed operator to one inmate on an apprenticeship basis. The trainees will service such institutions as Woodbridge State School, Leesburg State Prison and the Correctional Institution for Women at Clinton. The only cost involved is the purchase of a text book.

The combination of training in an area marked by good job prospects and production of a useful product or service should be pursued.

Along this line the Commission feels that a proposal of the Department of Purchase merits consideration. There is the possibility that the State could purchase a food-processing plant to prepare meals for state institutions and schools. The labor force at this plant would be comprised of inmates from the state correctional institutions, thereby offering them training in an area which has a labor demand, while producing a serviceable product to the State.

The Commission reiterates its earlier recommendations that State Use Industry develop an office machine repair operation. Currently, the State awards over 4 million dollars in service contracts to this area. State Use Industry could organize a similar operation which would provide profitable, useful training, as well as a service to the State.

While there are restrictive laws and policies and the historical opposition of labor and industry, we believe that a more efficient system of State Use Industry can be developed. A comprehensive modernization of the traditional State Use Industry's system is needed. The Commission recommends an intensive effort be made to develop new product lines through active pursuit of industry and labor's cooperation. We suggest that business and union representatives be impaneled to assist in this modernization.

STATE USE INDUSTRY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A comprehensive modernization involving an intensive effort to develop new product lines through active pursuit of industry and labor's cooperation.

2. That laws requiring State and County agencies to purchase State Use products be more diligently enforced.

3. That the State explore the possibility of increasing sales to public authorities and municipalities.

4. That an appeal system be established with the Department of Purchasing, thereby affording the Bureau of State Use Industry's recourse in sales' disparities.

5. In view of the many obstacles to expanding State Use markets, the Advisory Council to the Bureau of State Use Industry should be restructured along the lines previously recommended by the Governor's Management Commission.

6. The administration of State Use Industry adopt new management procedures which would include:
   - manufacturing in advance and having ready stock;
   - establishing a quality control system;
   - improved delivery schedule procedures;
   - competitive pricing with private enterprise.

7. Expansion and refinement of State Use Industry to provide greater skill training.

8. A pilot project in office machine repair and food service preparation.

RELEASE PROGRAMS

A man's employment importantly affects his self-esteem and his ability to support himself and family without resort to crime. Job preparation and placement becomes an even more important aspect of rehabilitation. A career training program properly implemented would build up false hopes and result in a frustrating relapse for the inmate unless it is channeled into meaningful employment or betterment upon release.

It is an irony of circumstance that corrections, which is so removed and isolated from the community, is the structure designated to influence and dispel anti-social behavior needed to re-enter society. The concept of reintegrating offenders into the community includes the explicit assumption that as many community structures as possible become involved in the rehabilitative task.

Early in its study the Commission saw the need to alleviate this isolation. It recommended establishing Trade Advisory Councils which would:

- be attuned to the current job market;
- possess the knowledge needed to determine the areas and manner of training;
- assist in active job placement.

There are three such organizations currently operative in the state correctional institutions.

- Yardville Correctional Institution has New Jersey Automobile Dealers Association.
- Rahway State Prison has a Council composed of union and state agency representatives.
- Clinton Correctional Institution for Women has a Business Advisory Committee for its secretarial course.

Since Leesburg State Prison is just beginning its vocational education program the Commission recommends that it structure a similar organization. The corrections administration should also adopt this program for Trenton State Prison, which needs assistance in ascertaining its vocational training requirements.

There is common agreement that the lack of meaningful employment opportunities has been a major contributing cause to the rising crime rate and the high rate of recidivism and, in turn, to the increasing cost of crime. Unless assimilation into the community is facilitated by the availability of suitable jobs, confinement in state correctional institutions will continue to be a wasteful and high cost revolving door system.

The Manpower Development Training Administration of the Department of Labor reveals that:

- Ex-offenders can be trained and placed in employment, regardless of previous education or the nature of their crime;

- When ex-offenders are placed in appropriate jobs their rate of recidivism is two to three times less than that of ex-offenders who do not receive job assistance;

- Ex-offenders with better paying jobs are much less likely to be a recidivist than those with no jobs, part-time jobs or lower paying jobs; and,

- If the released offender gets a remunerative job on release and is able to keep it for at least six months the probability of recidivism declines.

The importance of employment in the rehabilitation process places a tremendous responsibility, and opportunity, in the business community. Businessmen should take the initiative in opening doors to jobs for ex-offenders by:

- providing post- and pre-release employment opportunities in meaningful positions;

- giving appropriate guidance to correctional administrators regarding job trends and anticipated employment openings;

- mobilizing business and public support for improved industrial and vocational training programs in institutions;

- providing volunteer management expertise to advise on curriculum and equipment needed for realistic training; and,

- informing the memberships of business associations about the manpower resources available from correctional institutions.

The Commission recommends that the Commissioner of Labor and Industry convene a state-wide meeting of representatives of the National Alliance of Businessmen, the State Chamber of Commerce, New Jersey Manufacturers Association, and similar organizations to acquaint them with the needs of the state correctional system, as well as the ready labor pool it provides.

Once acquainted with the situation these organizations would then canvass their membership to determine any interest in participating in a work release program or hiring ex-offenders. All positive responses from prospective employers would then be registered with the Department of Labor's Employment Services, which would assist the Division of Correction and Parole in placing released offenders or work releasees in a job.

The Commission organized such a project on a limited scale with the Trenton Chapter of the National Alliance of Businessmen. This involvement successfully resulted in identifying job opportunities which were then relayed to the Division of Correction and Parole. Similar efforts, based on this model, should be attempted in other locations throughout the State.

All the effort involved and the cooperation of various agencies and industries will be wasted if prohibitive statutes and bonding requirements prevent the hiring of ex-offenders. Too often public and employer attitudes, laws and licensing regulations bar ex-offenders from employment.

The government itself, which urges the ex-offender to pursue a normal law-abiding life is the same government that bars the way to that pursuit. Thus, the State must make a conscious effort to review such statutes and revise them to relevancy.

A blatant example of this is the restriction imposed by the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control, based on N.J.S.A. 33: 1-25 and 26, which prohibits the employment of any person who has been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude. Through this restriction a person with a criminal record is deprived of the opportunity to work in any establishment which serves liquor, thereby eliminating numerous job opportunities.

Removal of such strictures will add another support to the possibility of an inmate acquiring gainful employment. The Commission recommends that legislation be drawn repealing this particular law. The Commission also supports and endorses Senate Bill No. 943, which is an act designed to remove impediments and restrictions upon convicted offenders preventing them from obtaining employment or participating in a vocational or educational rehabilitation program based solely upon the existence of a criminal record.

Work Release

Among the opportunities afforded a limited number of inmates is the Work/Study Release Program. The design of this program allows an inmate to advance his independence and responsibility, by offering him the opportunity to utilize community resources while still residing in a state correctional institution.

The effectiveness of this program suffers from the same stigma marking all of corrections - remoteness and fear.

The elimination of community fear will come about with an awareness of how controlled and successful an operation it has been. Since its inception in 1969 the Work Release Program has involved a total of 1498 inmates. Currently, there are 250 inmates on work release and 50 on study release. It is encouraging to note the increase from the beginning of the Commission in January 1971 when 60 inmates were on work release and 6 on study release.

The physical remoteness of the institutions poses a transportation problem. To alleviate this problem the Commission arranged for cars to be rented from the State Motor Pool to be used by work/study releasees. The current operation involves 3 cars being used at 3 institutions.

More cars are still required. The Commission recommends that the Department of Purchase make surplus vehicles available to the Division of Correction and Parole. Any maintenance required on these vehicles would be done at the institution. A program involving community service groups, volunteering their membership could be developed to chauffeur work/study releasees, thereby freeing correctional personnel for other duties.

The Commission urges the establishment of regional community center facilities, where inmates who are in work release programs could be housed separate from the general population. Such an arrangement provides a solution to security problems posed by the Division of Correction and Parole. The immediate absence of such physical facilities, however, should not preclude expansion of work release opportunities.

Pre-release

Assuming that all efforts have been expended to assist an inmate in his rehabilitation we arrive at the crucial stage of re-entry into society, the goal of all effort and perhaps the measure of successful treatment. An inmate referred to this period as "the trauma of moving from total confinement to total freedom - with no preparation."

Presently, this vital transition stage bridging dependence to independence consists of:

- a lack of orientation within the institution;
- no coordination in the process of institutional transferal to outside resources;
- sporadic efforts to secure definite job placement;
- ignorance of supportive services in the community;
- lectures concerning the restrictions and rules of parole.

The picture is bleak indeed, when one considers that the highest percentage of post-release failures occur within six months after release, with the greatest number happening during the first 60 days.

From the moment an inmate enters the correctional system he should be prepared for his departure. An intensive effort at counseling and advising on employment, leisure time, continuing education, consumer affairs, income management, and utilization of community resources should occur 60 to 90 days prior to release.

Current operations are woefully inadequate. At the prison level, where the average length of stay is 27 months, individual pre-release procedures consist of one 2-hour session with the Institutional Parole Officer. The Youth Correctional Institutions fare somewhat better, although the average stay there is 11 months. The pre-release program at correctional institutions consists of a social education or social readjustment class involving about 15 hours.

Even the description just given is misleading. The Commission has encountered individuals who left with nothing other than gate money - no information about social security cards, no license, no transportation schedule, no job availability, no housing. The gates were opened and they were just let out.

An adroit manipulation of existing personnel and expanded use of community resources could alleviate this sorry situation.

The University of Wisconsin staged a Conference on Education and Training in Correctional Institutions in 1968 at which Clyde E. Sullivan observed that,

> "There has been an unfortunate tendency for corrections to seek to develop its own full array of services because they have been relatively isolated from resources already existing in the community. This has resulted in under-staffed, underbudgeted, and make-shift duplication."

Ultimately it must be the community, not corrections, which is the strength of the offender. An attempt needs to be made to reduce the alienation of the offender from his community. Assistance in this process could be provided by utilizing community resources.

The Commission recommends a pre-release program similar to one operative in Wisconsin, and one suggested by the Massachusetts Governor's Task Force on Correctional Industires. Its operation involves active community participation in the pre-release process. Volunteer instructors from business, professions, private life, and representatives from Federal, State, and local governments assist in reorienting and preparing the inmate for his return home or to parole supervision. The course content is an acclimitization of the individual to family, work, community, leisure, and government. An important aspect of such outside participation is the realization, by the inmates, that people are interested in them as individuals.

RELEASE PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establishment of regional community center facilities, where inmates who are in work release programs could be housed separate from the general population.

2. A full time work release coordinator at each institution to serve as a liaison with the classification committee and potential and actual employers in the community.

3. The processing and job placement be coordinated more closely to assure that an inmate enjoys the maximum opportunity to seek employment. While prompt classification would add to present waiting lists, it would insure fairness to inmates, give them more opportunity to develop their own jobs and would provide the basis for greater administrative accountability.

4. Develop a volunteer program to transport inmates to work/study release sites.

5. Charge inmates no more than a third (1/3) of his net salary toward institutional maintenance.

6. A more effective coordination with the State Employment Service and Civil Service to obtain definite job placement and counseling for a releasee.

7. Each institution canvass its area educational facilities for possible course offerings for the inmates. Corrections must make the overture to school administrations to determine their willingness to participate.

8. A complete review of legislation prohibiting or restricting employment of ex-offenders. Wherever feasible legislation should be drawn removing these barriers to employment.

9. Develop a pre-release program embracing community participation with volunteer instructors from business, professions, private life, and representatives from Federal, State, and local governments to assist an inmate in his return to society.

10. A state-wide meeting of representatives from National Alliance of Businessmen, State Chamber of Commerce, New Jersey Manufacturers Association, labor unions, and similar organizations to acquaint them with the needs of the state correctional system.

CONCLUSION

The Commission never labored under the delusion that it could vitalize a system encrusted by contradicting philosophies, a hodge-podge of organizational structure, and the neglect and open hostility of the public and legislators. The failure of our correctional system is well documented. Recitation of statistics merely mesmerizes and nullifies the acute awareness needed to promote and support correctional programs that really correct.

Public uncertainty and lack of consensus on what constitutes an effective approach will result in weak and inconsistent legislative support for correctional programs. The Commission calls on the community to mobilize public and legislative support for treatment and alternatives to incarceration. We hesitate to equate the human dividend with the tax dividend, but crime prevention and criminal rehabilitation are economically advantageous and beneficial in reducing recidivism. All citizens should work toward a correctional system that in fact corrects. Such an effort can only serve to help make our communities safer and better places in which to live.

Only through a clear presentation of facts to those in society who have the power to demand and create change can any headway be made in reducing the social and economic costs of crime. Almost all offenders must legally be returned to the community someday. The public must become aware of the need to rehabilitate and equip them to become productive members of the community.

The recommendations of the Commission may or may not prove to be effective, or even acted upon. This possibility does not temper our zeal in offering them. In addition to them we posit the following observations

garnered from our involvement in the correctional system.

- Rehabiliation begins with the individual. The system can only extend opportunities to the individual.

- Incarceration without rehabilitation temporarily postpones the offender's problem, but it does not solve them.

- An influx of funds and programs provides a momentary respite but does not confront or alter the crux of the problem.

The Commission did not intend a complete description of the New Jersey Correctional System or a final definitive statement of what ought to be done. Our aim was to be supportive of efforts to marshal resources out of concern for the health, education, welfare, and dignity of the inmate committed to New Jersey's Correctional System.

The Commission offered the Division of Correction and Parole remedial and innovative suggestions, subject to change as information and experience develop. The Commission did not intend to provide a quick solace or support for those who believe in, or are seeking, a quick solution to the current crime problem. There is none.

> "the social forces that have brought justice into crisis- the riptides of crime and the encrusted cynicism of the system - are the legacy of generations of neglect, and, even given the will and the resources, it will take generations more to reverse them." (3)

Our hope was to proffer successful models on a limited basis subject to expansion when time and developments warrant it. We call for a continuing review, along with evaluation systems, to assure the success and improvement of the total program.

---

(3) Newsweek, March 8, 1971

ERIC Clearinghouse
JUL 10 1972
on Adult Education